

Quarterly NEWS-LETTER

OF THE BOOK CLUB OF
CALIFORNIA

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THE WILLIAM MORRIS CENTENARY

By Albert M. Bender, Chairman, Publication Committee

WILLIAM MORRIS, author, poet, designer and, as founder and guiding spirit of the Kelmscott Press, the most potent figure in the modern revival of fine printing, was born on March 24, 1834. To commemorate the centenary of his birth, the Club is having prepared and will present to its members an item of William Morris interest that will, it is believed, be highly prized by collectors.

The William Morris souvenir will reach members within a few days after the distribution of this issue of the News-Letter. It has a special interest in that it relates to the design of the famous Kelmscott Chaucer, one

of the most magnificent achievements in printing history. The folder will reproduce, in the sizes of the originals, a rare proof sheet of a projected page of the Chaucer made while Morris was experimenting with the typographical design of the book, and—opposite it—a facsimile page showing the same text arranged in the style that was finally adopted. Printed by The Grabhorn Press on hand-made paper and by the same method used by Morris, these reproductions, together with the explanatory text, will constitute an item of unusual interest to every lover of beautiful books.

The distribution of this keepsake to members will coincide with the opening of the William Morris Centenary Exhibition, to be held at Mills College, California, from March 4 to March 24.

COLLECTORS CLUBS PLAN JOINT ACTIVITY

THE CLUB is happy to announce that plans have been completed for an activity that cannot fail to be of interest to every member. In cooperation with other book collectors societies throughout the country, the Club will soon publish a catalogue in which will be listed a comprehensive selection of the publications of all the clubs participating. For a period of sixty days, a member of any of the clubs will be offered the privilege of purchasing the publications of all the others. In other words, members of The Book Club of California will have an opportunity to acquire the publications of these well known book collectors societies, and the same privilege will be extended to members of the other clubs who wish to buy titles from our list.

This is the first cooperative enterprise in which the private book clubs of the country have ever engaged. It presents collectors with an opportunity that is hardly likely to be offered again. The clubs participating in the venture are: The Grolier Club, New York; The Caxton Club, Chicago; The Club of Odd Volumes, Boston; The Carteret Book Club, Newark; The Book Club of Texas, Dallas; and The Book Club of California.

In nearly every case, this will be the first time any of these clubs has offered its publications to other than its own members. We feel that many of our members will wish to take advantage of this exceptional opportunity to secure the publications of these well known book collectors societies, and that those belonging to the other clubs will wish to acquire titles from our list.

Final details of the plan are now being worked out and the catalogue is in preparation. It will probably be distributed in April. Members should bear in mind that this offer will remain open only sixty days, that it is made only to members of the participating clubs, and that in many cases the number of copies of publications offered is limited and that prompt orders are desirable.



THE CALIFORNIA MINING TOWNS SERIES

MEMBERS have now received the first four parts of this series. Parts Five, Six and Seven are in active preparation and arrangements for the production of the remaining five are now being made. The Club is gratified at the interest displayed in this venture. Gold and gold mining have everywhere assumed new importance in recent weeks, and this series, reflecting the romance and drama of the

greatest of all gold rushes, has been very widely commented upon. Dozens of inquiries have reached the Club from all parts of the country, and there is every indication that complete sets of this series will presently become both rare and valuable.

The schedule for the next three months is as follows: Part Five, to reach members about March 15, will be Shasta in 1856, designed and printed by Frank McCaffery of Seattle; Part Six (April) will be Nevada City, designed and printed by The University of California Press, Berkeley; and Part Seven (May), Jackson in 1856, is to be produced by The Metropolitan Press, Portland. The names of the printers who will design the remaining parts, and of the towns to be represented (among them Placerville, Columbia and Grass Valley) will be announced later.

Of the 100 duplicate sets reserved for sale to members, the greater part has now been subscribed. Those remaining will be allotted in the order in which subscriptions are received. In addition to these, 25 sets have been put aside for incoming members. As long as this supply lasts, new members will receive upon election the parts already issued, in order that their sets may be complete. Members who have been planning to propose the names of friends will assure that the latter receive complete sets by sending in their names before this limited supply is exhausted.

A portfolio to contain and preserve the series is now being designed. It will be supplied to members at cost.



NOTICE OF THE ANNUAL MEETING

THE ANNUAL MEETING will be held at the office of the Club, 110 Sutter Street, San Francisco, on Friday, March 23, 1934, at 8:15 P.M. A Board of Directors to serve for the year ending March 24, 1935, will be elected, reports of the President, Treasurer, and Secretary covering the previous year will be submitted, and officers and committees to serve during the next twelve months will be selected.

On February 24, a Nominating Committee, consisting of Messrs. Eugene Prince, Henry H. Hart, and Garfield D. Merner, was appointed by the President. The Committee's selection of candidates for the new board will be posted in the Club's quarters for two weeks prior to the date of the Annual Meeting.

At the close of the official business of the meeting, there will be open discussion of the Club's activities and plans for the coming year. It is hoped that all members who can conveniently do so will attend.

A PROGRAM FOR THE NEWS-LETTER

WITH THIS ISSUE, the News-Letter completes its first year, and the occasion seems appropriate for a few words about plans for its future development. Heretofore it has been given over entirely to news of Club activities, and to emphasizing (perhaps monotonously) the necessity for maintaining and increasing the membership.

These are proper functions of the Club's bulletin, and they will be continued in future issues. But it was not

entirely for such purposes that the quarterly was launched. It was the hope that it might gradually develop into something of wider value to members; that it might become a medium for preserving and for circulating among book lovers some of the wealth of interesting literary and bibliographical material available on the Pacific Coast. Under this plan, each issue would contain a variety of material bearing on various phases of the literary West; authoritative, well-presented papers on the writing, printing, publishing and collection of books on the Pacific Coast, from pioneer days down to the present. It is believed that the publication of properly selected material on such subjects would be valuable to every book lover and collector interested in Western literature; that it would increase his pleasure in the books he possesses and constantly extend his knowledge and interests into new fields.

Naturally, this will have to be a gradual development. The program requires, first of all, a large increase in the number of pages of the quarterly, with an added expense that the Club's income does not now justify. Several plans for financing an enlarged quarterly have been proposed, but none of these seems entirely satisfactory. Possibly the real solution to this, as to other Club problems, lies in increased membership. Those who wish to speed plans for the quarterly as outlined above will render substantial aid by proposing the names of friends who will be interested in this and in other Club activities. As membership increases, so inevitably will the size and usefulness of the News-Letter.

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NOTES ON PUBLICATIONS

THE ANNOUNCEMENT elsewhere in this issue of the combined list of publications of American book clubs deserves the careful reading of every member. During the sixty days the offer will remain open every member of our Club will have the unique privilege of enriching his library by some examples of the publications of these famous book collectors societies. We are proud of having instituted this project, and appreciative of the cooperation of the governing bodies of the other clubs.

One effect of this enterprise may be confidently predicted. It will result in a considerable sale of our publications to members of the other clubs, with the likelihood that the supply of a number of the titles will be exhausted. The Publication Committee suggests, therefore, that members who plan to buy any of the publications on our list do so promptly. If they delay until after the new catalogue is distributed the titles they wish may no longer be available.

The Journal of Sebastian Vizcaino's Voyage to California in 1602, published in December, was well received by all the members who ordered copies. The fact that something more than 90 of the edition of 240 copies remain in stock can best be explained on the theory that some members have failed to realize the importance or interest of this narrative of early California exploration, or the attractiveness of its printing. However, the sale, though slow, has continued steadily; it is likely that by the end of the year few copies will remain on hand.

Progress is being made with plans for forthcoming publications, and the schedule for the remainder of the year will be announced in the next number of the News-Letter.

Miscellany

¶ Since the December issue of the News-Letter, the Club has elected 16 new members. Thus the roll maintains the slow but steady increase that began last fall. The Membership Committee hopes for a net gain of 60 members during 1934, an average of five a month. This is a comparatively modest goal. If members will continue to cooperate as they have in recent weeks, the Committee's estimate will presently seem hopelessly conservative.

¶ In his interesting department of typographical comment in The Saturday Review of Literature, Carl Purington Rollins, printer to Yale University, writes: "The Quarterly News-Letter of The Book Club of California, printed in Centaur and Lettre Batarde is as nice a bit of printing as one could ask for. 'Modernism' in typography will have to go far to better it."

¶ San Francisco's annual Book Fair, now in progress at the de Young Museum, Golden Gate Park, brings together an interesting collection of fine and rare books, including comprehensive exhibits of the work of the best-known Western fine printers. Members who reside in the Bay Region will find the exhibition, which continues through March, well worth a visit.

¶ Beginning with the next issue, the number of pages in the News-Letter will be increased to twelve. This will permit the inclusion in each number of one or two short articles, contributed by members, on various phases of collecting. Several interesting papers are now on hand, with others in prospect. The first two will appear in June.

The Grabhorn Press, Printers

